



**HOME BUILDERS & REMODELERS ASSOCIATION
OF CONNECTICUT, INC.**

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**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
Public Hearing Testimony
MARCH 15, 2023**

To: Chairpersons Rep. Kavros Degraw, Sen. Rahman, Ranking Members Rep. Zullo, Sen. Fazio and distinguished Members of the Planning & Development Committee

From: Jim Perras, CEO

**Re: H.B. No. 6890 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING QUALIFYING
TRANSITORIENTED COMMUNITIES. (Support with considerations)**

**H.B. No. 6892 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING MUNICIPAL BLIGHT
ORDINANCES. (Support)**

**H.B. No. 6893 (RAISED) AN ACT ESTABLISHING A TASK FORCE TO STUDY
THE EXEMPTION OF VACANT LOTS FROM CONFORMANCE WITH ZONING
REGULATIONS. (Support with amendments)**

The Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Connecticut (HBRA-CT) is a professional trade association with nearly 900 hundred business members statewide, employing tens of thousands of Connecticut residents. Our association of small businesses is comprised of residential and commercial builders, land developers, remodelers, general contractors, subcontractors, suppliers and those businesses and professionals that provide services to our diverse industry. We build between 70% to 80% of all new homes and apartments in Connecticut each year and engage in countless home remodeling projects.

The HBRA-CT appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 6890, H.B. 6892 and H.B. 6893.

H.B. 6890 is intended to stimulate increased housing production in areas with existing infrastructure while offering municipalities the autonomy to allow for additional units to be developed in a manner and location decided by the host community. According to recent U.S. Census data, CT has among the worst housing production numbers in the Country (second only to Illinois). In fact, the residential construction industry in Connecticut has been producing at or around recession level numbers in 2009, resulting in the housing accessibility crisis we find ourselves in today. Constricted supply met with recently high demand has contributed to price spikes in both the for sale and for rent markets, disproportionately impacting our most vulnerable residents, and creating barriers to market entry for first-time homebuyers. Efforts to increase housing production in Connecticut are important and necessary to address these challenges.

HBRA-CT supports the passage of HB 6890; however, we would caution against prescriptive statewide mandatory inclusionary provisions, as what might be effective in some communities could unintentionally harm production in areas where greater density in of itself would not be a sufficient incentive to offset the loss of revenue associated with the deed restricted units. Rather, the HBRA-CT would encourage policymakers to allow for greater latitude based on market realities in which builders, municipalities and the state could partner together to determine the right amount of set asides, if any, based on tax incentives, infrastructure assistance, PILOT, etc., that would ensure the viability of an individual project.

HBRA-CT supports the passage of HB 6892 which would eliminate the population threshold, thereby allowing any municipality to take advantage of existing receivership statutes to address blighted properties and expands existing law to also apply to blighted commercial properties. In addition, the bill would also increase the fine amounts for blight ordinance and litter violations. These are additional tools that can be used against absent (typically out-of-state) landlords by either interested private and/or non-profit entities to rehabilitate neglected buildings and revitalize communities that should be accessible to any municipality regardless of its size. Many of these properties, if rehabilitate would be naturally affordable housing that would help to alleviate the housing accessibility crisis Connecticut is currently facing.

HBRA-CT supports passage of HB 6893 with amendments. As the title eludes, HB 6893 would create a taskforce to study the development of vacant lots. Developable land is both scarce and expensive in Connecticut due, in large part, to overly restrictive local zoning. Should this bill become law and recommendation result in the utilization of undersized nonconforming lots it would allow for more efficient use of land and greater affordability in land development.

HBRA-CT recommends that HB 6893 be amended to include the following:

- 1 appointee representing the Home Builders & Remodelers Association of Connecticut with expertise in residential development.

This amendment would allow for input from a development professional with the requisite expertise necessary to provide the Taskforce with guidance on how best to draft recommendations to maximize the development of undersized nonconforming lots while minimizing impacts to local land use regulations.

The HBRA-CT once again thanks the Planning & Development for holding a hearing on H.B. 6890, H.B. 6892 and H.B. 6893 and urges your support. We ask that should the Committee vote favorably on these bills that the HBRA-CT be given an opportunity to work with stakeholders to improve them.